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H-3074

13 April 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Robert E. Cushman
Brigadier General, USMC
Assistant to the Vice President
The Capitol

Attached is the Cuban report I spoke to you about. Unless you particularly desire to retain it, either return to me or destroy after it has served its purpose.

25X1

[redacted]
Executive Officer

Attachment:
Memo to the Vice President
from the DCI dated 13 Apr 59,
Subject: Cuba

Distribution:
Original - Addressee w/att
1 - JSE
1 - DCI
1 - ER

NOTE: Transmittal of this memo to the Vice President concurred in by the Department of State (Mr. Snow in Secretary Rubottom's office).

MORI/CDF 32098 Pages 2 thru 4

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13 April 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Vice President
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT: Cuba

I believe you will be interested in reading the following report [redacted] 25X1

"1. Washington visit may make or break Castro. Unless he gets a strong helping hand from the U. S., many serious observers feel his regime will collapse within a matter of months.

"2. The economic situation is serious with lack of confidence in future. Castro's half-baked economic schemes and drastic and punitive revolutionary laws have scared the wits out of any one owning business, or property or money to invest. Spread of Communism throughout government departments, agencies, Armed Forces, labor, education, and other institutions suggests another Guatemala in the making. There is good reason to believe that unemployment will approach million mark when the sugar harvest ends next month. Castro's popularity declining sharply among upper and middle classes but he is still idol of the masses.

"3. Castro plans to put best foot forward in Washington. For this reason and because he needs financial help he is taking with him three of his most able and respected men: Rufo Lopez Fresquet, Minister of Finance; Felipe Pazos, head of National Bank; and Regino Boti, head of National Economy. Thus he hopes to create image of a government of youthful dynamic leadership supported by sound and respected advisers. The ranking demagog of Havana may become the thoughtful, dedicated, reasonable and wise leader in Washington appearances, but whether he can or will control his sensitivity to criticism and his emotional outbursts in uncertain.

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"4. He is leaving behind those advisers who accurately reflect the true character of his regime -- Che Guevara, Raul Castro, Carlos Franqui, Antonio Nunez Jimenez, Armando Hart and others of definite Marxist affiliations or tendencies.

"5. In his speeches Castro will probably appeal over the heads of the State Department and the "venal" press to the workers, farmers, students and housewives for support his revolution. He is supremely confident of his oratorical and persuasive powers. He is diligently improving his English.

"6. In appraising Castro in Washington, certain basic facts should be kept in mind:

A. He has shown considerable unfriendliness towards U.S. Government. By half-truths, exaggerations and outright lies he has endeavored whip up anti-Americanism in Cuba. Whether this is result of deep personal prejudice or demagoguery to attract masses has got to be proved.

B. He has never publicly criticised the Soviet Union or international or domestic communism. He has characterized anti-communism as a smoke screen for counter-revolutionists.

C. He has permitted Communists almost free rein in their infiltration of armed services, secondary labor ranks and educational and cultural institutions. Penetration of Government Departments more limited, not extending to heads. Castro himself can not yet realize extent to which he has been playing Communist game.

D. He has permitted persecution and detention of anti-Communists by Che Guevara and the Communist gang in control of La Cabana fortress.

E. He has permitted attacks on the church, on private education and on free press. He has vowed to create a single middle class by elevating the poor at the expense of the rich.

F. He is seriously considered by many to be a paranoiac.

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G. He has introduced honesty in government which was sadly needed and which if accompanied by wise policies could give great impetus to Cuba's economy.

H. He still has support of the masses.

"7. Local reaction to his trip is mixed:

A. Those anti-Communists who still retain some faith in revolution hope Fidel will be well received, will behave himself, will be politely but firmly told U.S. is disturbed by rising anti-Americanism and of spreading communism and that he will remain more favorably disposed toward U.S. and prepare to act on Communist threat.

B. Those who have lost faith in regime and look forward to its early demise are fearful U.S. officialdom will be taken in by Castro and will confer on him our stamp of approval thus prolonging indefinitely current sorry state of political and economic affairs.

C. Communists have taken no position regarding trip."

In case you should see Castro, I felt this might serve as useful background.

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

25X1

Note: Transmittal of this memo to the Vice President concurred in by the Department of State (Mr. Snow in Secretary Rubottom's office).

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